

helpful, well, of course, I'll try. But there's been no discussion about it and no decision made.

Q. Mr. President, could there have been an agreement today without your efforts last night?

The President. Oh, I certainly—I wouldn't say there couldn't have been. I was asked to help; I did my best to help.

But let me say again, there were people that I was talking to up until 8, 9 o'clock, even later, this morning who haven't been to bed in 48 hours. They sat and talked and worked and fought and argued and got back together. And for some of them, they put their political lives on the line; others may have put even more on the line, as you well know.

And they and the Prime Ministers and Senator Mitchell, who somehow kept it all together, they deserve the credit. I just tried to do what I was asked to do. If I played a positive role, I'm grateful to have had the chance to do so.

President's Easter Plans

Q. Happy Easter. Are you going to Camp David?

The President. I am. We're going up probably in the early evening, and I hope all of you have a great holiday. Bless you.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. What are you going to do about the Middle East? [*Laughter*]

The President. Well, we got Bosnia and Haiti, and now, I hope, Ireland. And I'll just keep working on it. The Irish thing ought to give you hope for the Middle East because the lesson is: just don't ever stop. And in the end, if the will for peace is stronger than the impulse to avoid it and the impulse to avoid the tough decisions and the sacrifices that are made—that

have to be made, then the will for peace can prevail. That's the lesson here.

So I would hope that those who care desperately about the Middle East and want the peace process there to prevail will take great heart here, because believe you me, I know a lot about this. There were a lot of tough decisions which had to be made, nobody could get everything they wanted, and risks had to be taken. And they were taken. And they now will be taken. And it seems to me that the friends of peace in the Middle East should take great heart from this, and perhaps we'll even find some examples that could be followed.

Thank you.

Reaction to Northern Ireland Peace Agreement

Q. Mrs. Clinton said that peace in Ireland is an article of faith. Is there going to be any kind of Clinton celebration here this evening?

The President. I'm celebrating right now, but we need to let the Irish people have their say. That's going to be in a few weeks.

Q. Going to let these guys go to sleep?

The President. Right now I want these guys to go to sleep. I hope nothing serious happens to our country in the next 8 hours, because I've got a bunch of pickle-brains in the NSC. [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:30 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Bertie Ahern and former Prime Minister John Bruton of Ireland; Prime Minister Tony Blair and former Prime Minister John Major of the United Kingdom; former Senator George J. Mitchell, independent chairman of the multiparty talks in Northern Ireland; and Sinn Féin leader Gerry Adams.

Message on the 30th Anniversary of the Fair Housing Act April 10, 1998

Warm greetings to everyone celebrating the 30th anniversary of the enactment of Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968—the Federal Fair Housing Act.

Within a week of the death of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the Congress passed and President Johnson signed into law this landmark leg-

islation, which has helped countless Americans achieve the American Dream. The theme of this anniversary celebration, “Many Neighborhoods—One America,” reflects the reality that people of diverse cultures and backgrounds can

live together in harmony and reaffirm the American ideals of equality, opportunity, and freedom.

By limiting housing choice, discrimination reduces the quality of life for many Americans. During the past three decades, we have made great strides in opening housing markets. But housing discrimination, although less apparent than in years past, still exists, and the need to enforce fair housing laws vigorously remains as urgent today as ever.

My Administration is committed to building strong partnerships between the Department of Housing and Urban Development and local communities. I have proposed the largest single increase in HUD's civil rights enforcement programs in two decades. My proposal includes a significant increase in funding for HUD's Fair Housing Initiatives and Fair Housing Assistance

Programs that, among other things, will combat racially motivated hate crimes related to housing. We are also seeking congressional approval to raise the Federal Housing Administration loan limit so that more Americans, including minorities and women, can become homeowners.

Working together, we can create a more just society that underscores our shared strengths instead of focusing on our differences. The Fair Housing Act continues to be an indispensable tool in these efforts, and as we celebrate its 30th anniversary, I call on all Americans to join me in making division and discrimination issues of the past, and to make America a stronger, better place to live for all of our people.

Best wishes for a memorable anniversary celebration.

BILL CLINTON

The President's Radio Address

April 11, 1998

Good morning. Across America and around the world, this is a holy weekend for three of the world's great religions. Christians are celebrating Easter; Jews, Passover; and Muslims have just ended their annual pilgrimage, the Hajj.

On this special weekend, the eyes of the world and the prayers of so many are focused on Northern Ireland, as an historic peace agreement was reached among representatives of all the major parties to that long and tragic conflict.

I especially want to salute the leadership of Prime Minister Bertie Ahern of Ireland, Prime Minister Tony Blair of Great Britain, and the leaders of all the parties who came together in a remarkable display of courage to set aside differences in the pursuit of peace. I also salute the previous Prime Ministers of Ireland and Great Britain, who started and nourished this peace process.

And all Americans should take a special measure of pride that the talks in Northern Ireland were chaired by George Mitchell, the former majority leader of the United States Senate, who has served his country and the cause of peace very, very well. I thank him for his brilliant leadership.

Of course, we understand that the pain and hatred of so many years cannot and will not be washed away in one weekend. So on behalf of the American people, I pledge the continuing aid, support, encouragement, and prayers of the United States to the effort to build a lasting peace and an enduring prosperity in Ireland and Northern Ireland.

In the last analysis, the future of that region lies in the hearts and hands of its people. Like so many Americans, part of my family calls Ireland home. And having been there, having met with so many remarkable Irish men and women from all sides of the conflict, I have seen the future in their eyes—a future in which children can grow up free from fear; a future rich with the lilt of Irish laughter, not the pain of bitter tears.

There may be those who seek to undermine this agreement by returning to violence, so we are resolved that the acts of peace and courage will triumph over acts of cowardice and terror.

Tomorrow the dawn will break on Easter morning. All across Ireland, Catholics and Protestants will, in their own way, proclaim their faith in the triumph of life over death. On this Easter, their leaders have lifted their Christian beliefs and have lived them by giving the people